



# The Storytellers



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## Chapter 1 by Glendo

You get from A to B, and there's some stuff in the way.

That's all stories are, right?

But it's not just about the 'A', the 'B', and the stuff in the way, it's how they all link together to create interest. It's what makes a person telling a story gain the honour of Storyteller.

There's an art to weaving stories. The Storytellers know that art. They live and breathe fantastical tales of unseen worlds and things yet to be. They're wizards of the pen, word-smiths, bold adventurers...

...You can call them anything, really. They don't have to be set in stone. They can become fluid, amorphous. They can bend nature's laws to their will, and summon forth otherworldly creatures from nowhere, and sculpt the world through their eyes-

However, that power does not reach beyond the page. Once they leave that realm, they are just people. Hermits, pilgrims, perhaps...but still people.

I just have one question: where did they go?

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Chapter 2 by StanG

Well, I'll tell you, if you're sitting comfortably...

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Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away...

No, no. Not that one.

There once was a King of a tiny realm...

No, not that one, either.

Hmm. Where should we go with this? Should we travel to distant planets of molten rock? Or, perhaps nearby planets with alien life forms? Maybe if we were to look deep under a violent sea? Or even inside a tumultuous atmosphere?

Or, perhaps we could imagine a place quietly, within our souls, wherein lie demons, monsters, evils that we must fight on a daily basis. It's quite simple really. Just close your eyes, heavy with potential sleep, awaiting the darkness which will grasp your mind and take you into the world of the Sandman. Disengage conscious thought and sit before the white sheet of a clear imagination, expectantly.

Thomas Fitzroy tried to do this each and every night after partaking of a light supper and at the end of an evening's session at his typewriter. He liked to use a typewriter so that his attempts at literary craftsmanship could be fashioned slowly, thoughtfully, satisfactorily.

Fitzroy was well known by the Revolutionaries to be one of the highest calibre Storytellers of the modern age and this became his evening practice of restoration: a rejuvenation of skill that otherwise would never be found, would perhaps even perish for lack of care. Without this nightly refreshment, he might soon lose the power in the tale and sink into depths of mediocrity, leaving in his wake darkened lands, dull with depression. The characters populating such lands would continue their banal daily existences, crying out for excitement and adventure without knowing the cause for their emptiness.

Instead, Fitzroy would spend hours each night, coffee on his desk, a partly used contraband ribbon in his typewriter and a clear path to follow to success where others struggled in the thick

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before the entire world as a subversive and a revolutionary and would never again see the grey of day.

And thus begins the tale of Thomas Fitzroy, illegitimate son of King Winston of Airstrip One and his consort Julia.

### Chapter 3 by Glendo



While sat at his usual spot, Fitzroy desperately attempted to conjure up images of other worlds within his mind, trying with all his strength to fend off the pangs of writer's block.

He knew there were ideas in there, somewhere... He would not constrain himself to the bonds of reality, he would set himself free, open his mind to the unknown-

Where should he start? His hands twitched at the typewriter, hesitant to begin transforming the white sheet before him until he had confirmed the route his story would take.

He could choose from any kind of story, and he knew that well. Lands of mystery and magic were an arm's reach from him. The bookshelves around his quarters were littered with recounts of impossible puzzles, evasive or violent villains, timid boys that became heroes, adventures in the outer reaches of the universe, and perhaps even more. Each fragment of his library was a gateway into the imagination, and there were hundreds to choose from even in the confines of his room. But his seething problem remained.

He did not know what to write.

How was he to make his story original? Was there any way for him to craft a masterpiece, despite the recipe with which to make one containing limited ingredients? Conventional plot structures, stock characters, and successful narrative methods swam through his mind as he fumbled through an ocean of half-baked ideas.

His eyes strayed to the clock. The gloating second hand continued its inevitable journey in mockery of him. The hours were dissolving into oblivion more quickly than his ideas, it seemed, and it would not be too long before the throes of tomorrow were upon him.

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All this time, he was searching for distant worlds to write about, when he should just have transformed the world with which he was accustomed! The words flowed through him like water through a pipe: an incessant stream of literature poured from his mind onto the page, which now had forgotten it was ever blank.

His world was not hard to write about. There was no real depth to it. Perhaps that was the irony: Storytellers founded worlds of immense proportions, and integrated stories into their many layers, while the world around them was so simplistic.

From the mind of Thomas Fitzroy, there spawned that evening a new life, a new setting, a new story-

\*

I shouldn't be here. They'll know I left the walls.

Yet, I can't help feeling that I'm supposed to have come here. Though they told me I should stay inside, I sense somewhere within me that I was meant to leave the enclosure that they made for us.

I breathe in the fresh air, bathed in the outside world. People used to live out here, away from the City. But now, the City is all people have. The City brings peace. The City employs the Protocol, which keeps the people safe.

They're all lies. One glance at the true Sun showed me that. They hid the true world from us.

I want it back.

\*

Fitzroy couldn't help but smile as he concluded the sentence. A mysterious opening was guaranteed to make the reader ask questions. Make them ask questions, and they are already in the story. They want the answers, he thought, answers to all of the ambiguous puzzles.

"But they won't get them today!" Fitzroy thought as he fell asleep. He picked up his cold cup of coffee from the desk and prepared to rest for the night, happy that he still had the freedom to write, at least in secret.

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Perhaps tomorrow, he could decide how to develop the plot. Perhaps the protagonist would get caught, or escape the Protocol to become a hermit, or-

#### Chapter 4 by [BLDE\_79] LeMaironi- merry chrysler



He heard a knock on his quarters.

"Monthly inspection. Will be locksmithing your door if you don't respond in two minutes."

Two minutes was the signal. A normal guard would say one minute, but a guard said two, they were "Inner Party," but they had an observer, so you should hide your Revolutionary paraphernalia. If the guard said "Keep the roses blooming," it meant that the only reason to even bother was to give a required description of your furniture.

Thomas Fitzroy already had his typewriter in a compartment he built into the underside of his bed.

"Come in."

The inspection began. The observer checked noticeably more thoroughly than the actual guard. The guard did the bedlift while the observer wasn't looking to check it off.

"Thank you for your compliance, Fitzroy."

"Thank you for our system, sir."

Thomas tried back for sleep when they left. He had a dream of a castle on a mountain crumbling. He thought it odd, then, cleared the dream, so he could let it replay to check for stability issues. It was perfect. Then it fell.

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